Gracejoy Hauser EEX6759

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**Article 1:**

Luft, P., Brown, C., & Sutherin, L. (2007). *Are you and your students bored*

*with the benchmarks? Sinking under the standards? Then transform your teaching*

*through transition!* TEACHING Exceptional Children, 39(6), pp. 39-46.

* Step 1 in integrating state standards with transition needs is to **identify and prioritize students’ transition needs** according to lifelong importance and value. Using the LCCE (Life Centered Career Education) curriculum, transition competencies are divided into three domains: a. Daily Living Skills, b. Personal-Social Skills, and c. Occupation Guidance and Preparation. To use this concept in my own classroom, I will look at my 4th & 5th graders and choose the most applicable transition competencies they need to work on as they finish elementary and prepare for middle school. (ie. Self-advocacy and begin to take control of their IEP’s/goals, perhaps start setting a goal to be able to pick preferred classes in middle school).
* **Collaborating with others** is another important component of incorporating transition needs to standard-based instruction. Everyone in the IEP team including the parents and student themselves will need to give input in prioritizing issues when designing instruction. For my own classroom, I will practice collaborating both formally (in IEP meetings) and informally by continuously communicating with the team about goal progress and adjusting instruction for the benefit of students.

**Article 2:**

Carter, E.W., Trainor, A.A., Sun, Y., & Owens, L. (2009). *Assessing the*

*Transition-Related Strengths and Needs of Adolescents With High-Incidence*

*Disabilities.* Exceptional Children, 76(1), 74-94.

* Article 2 offered some concrete guidance on what meaningful assessment encompasses as it relates to transition planning specifically with the study of 160 students with emotional and/or behavioral disorders (EBD) or learning disabilities (LD). A critical component of transition assessment is the fact that it is intended to be **strengths-based.** Having already been in so many IEP meetings even in my short 5 months of teaching, it’s only now that I learned the importance of emphasizing student’s strengths specially in transition meetings. I will apply this into my practice by making sure that transitional plans are focused and built on existing student’s strengths, preferences, interests, and skills to maximize opportunity for success.
* Secondly, I will prioritize the three areas which youth evidenced the most limited skills or knowledge. This includes community participation, employment, and further education and training. These areas relate directly those specifically outlined in IDEA (2004). Most of the students I teach having learning disabilities as well as emotional disorders. I need to make sure that I stress the importance of being a part of their community in ways such as volunteering and supporting other worthy causes. They also need to be introduced to different employment skills they will need later on as well as their options beyond high school life.

**Article 3:**

Parrish, P., & Stodden, R. A. (2009). *Aligning assessment and instruction with*

*state standards for children with significant disabilities.* TEACHING

Exceptional Children, 41(4), 46-56.

* A reminder that special education teachers need to raise the bar for our students by raising expectations, is one point I’m taking away from reading this article. Just as the Individuals With Disabilities Act (IDEA 1997) changed legislation to advocate the use of first-person language, teachers of students with disabilities must do the same and identify learners with special needs as students first and address disabilities second. As an ESE Resource Teacher, this means always acknowledging the individual first before their deficits. I also need to focus on their strengths and build on those versus look at what skills they are lacking.
* Developing a backward design to implement standards-based instruction is also a must. This is a practice that my elementary school has used all year long so this process is well in place when I started teaching just a few months ago. It means starting with the Big Idea as the beginning of a lesson. This encompasses the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards and its’ corresponding benchmarks as a guide for instructional activities. Essentially, it is starting with the end in mind. Our Reading, Math, and Science curriculum all begin each unit with the Big Idea questions that students attempt to answer as they learn concepts along. Each lesson then proceeds with a more focused Essential Questions to guide students in learning specific knowledge from the text.

**Article 4:**

Mazzotti, V.L., Rowe, D.A., Kelley, K.R., Test, D.W., Fowler, C.H., Kohler,

P.D., & Kortering, L.J. (2009). *Linking Transition Assessment and*

*Postsecondary Goals Key Elements in the Secondary Transition Planning Process.*

TEACHING Exceptional Children, 42(2), 44-51.

* This article reinforced a key component of the transition planning process, which is age-appropriate transition assessment. This includes the ongoing process of collecting data on the student’s needs, preferences, and interests as they relate to the demands of current and future working, educational, living, and personal and social environments. An age-appropriate transition assessment is the first step in creating a measurable post-secondary goal that reflects students’ needs, strengths, and preferences. In teaching my 5th graders, this means that I need to carefully research and find the ‘age-appropriate’ transition assessment(s) to give them that will effectively help them move on to middle school.
* Within the transition assessment, three questions need to be answered:

1. Where is the student presently?
2. Where is the student going?
3. How does the student get there?

The article says that transition assessment is a process that needs to start in middle school and continue through high school, however, I believe that this process is also applicable for 5th graders in elementary going to middle school. I can help my students get a solid transition foundation by going through these questions with them towards the end of their elementary career.

**Article 5:**

Capizzi, A.M. (2008). *From assessment to annual goal engaging a*

*decision-making process in writing measurable IEPS.* TEACHING Exceptional

Children, 41(1), 18-25.

* In using assessment data to formulate the IEP, one way to encourage team participation and preparedness is to provide each member of the team with a checklist to guide them as they collect information for the IEP may increase the likelihood that team members are prepared for the meeting. This checklist idea, when I incorporate it for my own student’s IEP meetings, would be a sensible way to express the importance of each team member as they contribute vital information for the IEP development.
* Working on my student’s IEP Progress Reports this year, I had difficulty finding the right words and specific comments to put when it came to behavioral observation data. Reading this article reminded me that I can use the following to record behavioral data: **Frequency** (attendance, work completed, and so forth), **Latency** (amount of time to begin working after given an assignment), **Rate** (number of times student initiates interactions with a peer during a 20-min cooperative learning activity) & **Duration** (how long a student remains in his or her seat). Gaining all the knowledge from these assessment articles, I feel more equipped and confident as I face the next school year, when it comes to writing measurable annual goals.